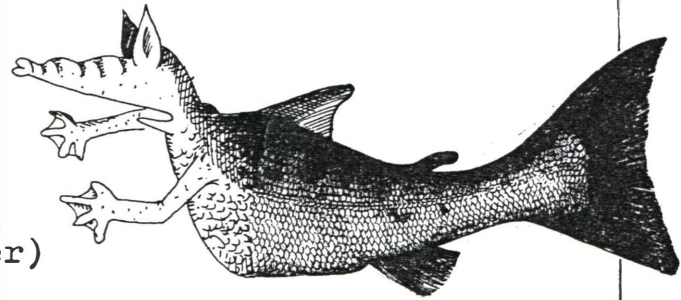


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O Ichthus playful in the
Sea-lodges that forever deep
keep
their secret of exitement
hidden.
(W.H. Auden: New Year Letter)



BEHEMOTH:

● SCOTLAND: HERE ARE THE PRE-1900 REPORTS OF MONSTERS IN SCOTTISH LAKES THAT I PROMISED YOU LAST BILK.

ZEDLER, THE 18TH CENTURY GERMAN ENCYCLOPAEDIST, IN VOL.18, P.330 OF HIS "UNIVERSAL LEXICON", PUBLISHED IN 1738, WRITES: "LOMUND, ALSO CALLED LOUGH LOMUND, IS A LAKE IN THE COUNTY DUMBARTH. IT LIES IN THE MOUNTAINS, IS 3 MILES LONG AND 7 MILES BROAD. THERE ARE SOME THIRTY ISLANDS IN IT. THE LOCALS FIX SEVERAL PIECES OF WOOD TOGETHER, COVER IT WITH GRASS, AND ROW FROM ISLAND TO ISLAND WITH THESE RAFTS. THIS LED TO THE LEGEND THAT THERE ARE SWIMMING ISLANDS IN THE LAKE. THE LAKE IS RICH IN FISH. CAMBDEN, DESCR. MAGN. BRITANN. BUCHANAN. HIST. SCOT." IN VOL. 35, P.104, PUBLISHED IN 1743, HE LIST LOCH LOMOND AS ONE OF THE "WONDERS OF SCOTLAND": "THE LAKE LOMUND, THERE ARE FISH WITHOUT FINS, WHICH TASTE GOOD. THE WATER OF THIS LAKE TURNS WOOD INTO STONE. THERE ARE 24 STRANGE ISLANDS, ONE OF THESE IS A SWIMMING ISLAND. MOST WONDERFUL OF ALL IS THAT THE WAVES OF THIS LAKE ARE ALWAYS AGITATED, EVEN WHEN THE AIR IS STILL." SO HERE WE HAVE THE "WAVES WITHOUT WIND, FISH WITHOUT FINS AND SWIMMING ISLAND", WHICH HAVE BEEN REPORTED FROM LOCH TAY AND LOMOND. THE FISH ARE EDIBLE, THE WAVES A METEOROLOGICAL PHENOMENON, THE SWIMMING ISLANDS MAN-MADE. THESE "WONDERS" HAVE OFTEN BEEN CONSIDERED AS EARLY NESSIE ACCOUNTS, BUT WITH THIS FINE DESCRIPTION, BANG! GOES ANOTHER HISTORICAL REPORT. IS SOMEONE ABLE TO CHECK THE LATIN REFERENCES?

THE FIRST NESSIE STORY IN THE INVERNESS COURIER WAS PUBLISHED ON JULY 1, 1852 (REPRINTED IN THE IC ON JULY 4, 1952, P.3B): "A SCENE AT LOCHEND.- ONE DAY LAST WEEK, WHILE LOCH NESS LAY IN A PERFECT STATE OF CALM, WITHOUT ANY RIPPLE ON ITS SURFACE, THE INHABITANTS OF LOCHEND WERE SUDDENLY THROWN INTO A STATE OF EXITEMENT BY THE APPEARANCE OF TWO LARGE BODIES STEADILY MOVING ON THE LOCH, AND MAKING FOR THE NORTH SIDE FROM THE OPPOSITE SHORE OF ALDOURIE. EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD TURNED OUT TO WITNESS THE EXTRAORDINARY SPECTACLE. MANY WERE THE CONJECTURES AS TO WHAT SPECIES OF CREATURE THESE ANIMALS COULD BELONG; SOME THOUGHT IT WAS THE SEA-SERPENT COILING ALONG THE SURFACE, AND OTHERS A COUPLE OF WHALES OR LARGE SEALS. AS THE UNCANNY OBJECTS APPROACHED THE SHORE VARIOUS WEAPONS WERE PREPARED FOR THE ONSLAUGHT. THE MEN WERE ARMED WITH HATCHETS, SOMEWHAT IN THE STYLE OF THE LOCHABER BATTLE - AXES OF OLD, THE YOUNG LADS WITH SCYTHES, AND THE WOMEN PRINCIPALLY WITH PITCHFORKS... AT LAST A VENERABLE PATRIARCH CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THEY WERE A PAIR OF DEER, AND OFF HE SET TO FETCH AN OLD 'NICCOISEAM' (A RIFLE), WHICH APPEARED NOT TO HAVE BEEN USED SINCE THE LUCKLESS DAY OF BLAR-NAM-MAGAL. AS THE SUPPOSED DEER CAME WITHIN RANGE OUR HERO TOOK AIM, AND WAS JUST ON THE EVE OF FIRING, WHEN SUDDENLY HE DASHED THE GUN TO THE GROUND, EXCLAIMING IN THE TRUE MOUNTAIN TONGUE, 'DIA MU'N CUAIRT DUINN, 'S IAD NA H'EICH-UISG A TH-ANN!' THOUGH NOT ACTUALLY THE MUCH DREADED 'KELPIES', THEY PROVED TO BE A VALUABLE PAIR OF PONIES BELONGING TO ALDOURIE, WHICH PROBABLY FROM THE INTENSE HEAT OF THE DAY BETHOUGHT THEMSELVES OF INDULGING THEMSELVES WITH A DIP IN THE COOLING WATERS OF LOCH NESS. THE LOCH IS FULLY A MILE IN BREADTH AT THIS POINT." I THINK THIS IS AN IMPORTANT REPORT, IT SURELY IS THE

first time Loch Ness is mentioned in connection with a sea-serpent. But Inverness newspapers had mentioned local freshwater-monsters from other lochs regularly in the 19th century. Here are some examples that I have found:

Inverness Advertiser, 14. March 1854, p.6c: Mr. Banks, of Lettermore, Gruinard, investigated reports about a "fish of large size" in a Highland loch. (I think Costello mentions this in his book.)

Scottish Highlander, 24. May 1888: Monster in Loch-na-Beiste, at Aultbea, Letterewe, Gairloch.

Scottish Highlander, 23. August 1888, p.3c: In June 1879, Alex Maciver observes a monster in Loch Bad-I-Cramh, Strath, Inverasdale. It resembled a "giant calf".

Scottish Highlander, 4. Oktober 1888, p.6c: Alleged monstrous fish in Loch Laxy, North Harris. It was seen around 1808, and in 1888, by a woman on her way home from Tarbert. She was badly frightened, and could only tell it was a "50 ft long horrible creature".

It seems that all these early Scottish monsters were more or less typical kelpies, and had few in common with the plesiosaur-type monster of today. But this is changing now - we'll have a report of Ogo-pogo that is clearly a zeuglodon - and the more publicity Mackal and his zeuglodon will get, the more zeuglodons will appear in our lakes.

• Loch Ness: Ronnie Brenner, of the monster museum in Drumadrochit, saw the beastie in 1984: "It's very large. It looked like an upturned boat. It was about 25 feet long and 200 metres off the shore."

The sonar expedition yielded further results: In addition to the two contacts already mentioned in BILK 18, there was one more during the main search, and one at a later small scale search. More details on the contacts, see the extra-large copy of Nessletter. Shine was summing up for the press: "We made mid-water contacts which strike us as stronger than fish. Having gone back, we failed to re-contact them. It's very encouraging news because it means that whatever it was had moved away." Sources: Saudi Gazette, 15.10., p.10; Argentinisches Tageblatt, 10.10., p.9g; Observer, 11.10., p.1; Saudi Gazette, 11.10., p.4d, and 14.10., p.6d; Newsweek, 19.10., p.20; Bunte, 6.11.? - I have still more articles, but lost my notes.

• Loch Ness: "The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes", by Billy Wilder, starring Nessie, was shown on ZDF (German TV) on Oktober 30 - just in time. And a last item about the expedition: Die Zeit, 30.10., p.75)

• Lake Okanogan: Science Frontiers 53 (Sep-Oct 1987) has an item on a July 1974 sighting of Ogo-pogo. Mrs. Clark saw a 8 ft hump and a long tail with a whale-like fluke.

• Washington: American waterpolice has discovered a 11-ft sturgeon floating dead in a lake at Bellevue, Washington, USA. A specialist for sturgeons, Mrs. Gail Kretman, thought the fish to be some 80 years old. There had been sightings of a giant, fish-like monster which swallowed ducks, in the lake. So there is another solved freshwatermonster, and, again, it has turned out to be some already well-known species of fish: no dinosaur, nothing paranormal. (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 10. 11., p.40e; and Sonntag Aktuell, 8.11., p.3)

Interestingly, while reading a book on volcanoes, I have discovered what may be Washington's first freshwater-monster-story. In 1847, Paul Kane drew pictures of Mt. St. Helens, and asked the local Indians about it. They never ventured near, because they thought a race of cannibalistic indians lived there. Also, beside the volcano, "they claim there is a lake with strange fish, which have heads like bears." (Heinz Haber: Wenn unser Planet zürnt, Langen Müller, Munich 1986, p.54. Haber regrettably gives no source).

• Land Dragons: On the Paluxy-Tracks, see letter-to-the-editor (by myself) in the Nightlights (Mannheim), Sept. 1987, p.44. An article on the rock-towers of Venezuela (mentioned several times in BILK) in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung (30. Oct. , p.47/48) alludes to Doyle's Lost World, but makes no mention of surviving dinosaurs there. Finally. Michel Reynal has informed me that a new species of giant gecko was discovered in New Zealand.

ISIS:

● Steller's Sea Ape: I have to thank Mr. M. Lewis for sending me the BBC Wildlife item, and Michel Raynal for a copy of the relevant article in Smeeton's book. The drawing of Gesner, which I reproduced in the last issue of BILK, is surely what is called Jenny Haniver, an artificial monster made of dried rays. It's resemblance to the animal observed by Steller is a coincidence.

● "Water Apes": You have probably all heard of the theory that human evolution began with water-dwelling hominids. This would explain (probably) the aquatic sasquatch, as well as some mermaid stories, but I remain sceptical. Anyway, a good summary is in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 21. October 1987, p.59.

LEVIATHAN:

● United Kingdom?: You find reports where you never expected them to be. In the Musik Express, November 1987, p.87 (a German magazine) in an interview with the pop-group Bananarama, Keren Woodward says that the British tabloids have printed several rather silly stories about the group: "Last week the 'Mirror' had a headline: Bananarama Beauty Attacked by Seamonster." Nonsense, of course. From the few details quoted, it seems the monster the Mirror had in mind was only a shark, but what does that matter, as the whole story is a hoax?

● Irkuem: I now have the article by A. Androshin in Pravda, 29.9., p.6. This is half a page long - too long to be reproduced here. I had classified the irkuem as Leviathan in last BILK because the polar-bear is a semi-aquatic mammal, but it seems this mystery bear is a land animal. I summarise the additional information: R.N. Sibolobov, a hunter, has collected many reports, and one fur of an actual irkuem. I have already quoted the description, Pravda adds that its head is small and elongated like that of a polar bear, and it is of a pale white colour. The irkuem stays in small defined territories far away from man, but its presence is established for three counties in the Autonomous Koryakian Region. In autumn 1986 one was killed in Kamchatka. Sibolobov sent specimens to several zoologists. Some thought it was nothing else but an ordinary Kamchatka bear, others were of the opinion it was a surviving Arktodus, which lived 10,000 years ago in the USA. Microscopical examination of the fur yielded no results. N. K. Wercagin, of the Zoological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, explained that the irkuem might actually exist (in contrast to ABSM). He also expressed belief in marine monsters, and the Congo dinos. Very interesting.

USOS:

● Wales: Peter Mastenko describes a cycle-tour to Pembroke. (in Cycle-touring, April/May 1987, p.118) He stayed in Broad Haven Youth Hostel (no date is given): "The sunset was memorable, with fine views across St Bride's Bay. Two of us noted a strange, distant, darker patch moving at a speed greater than the surrounding cloud forms; we thought nothing more of it until reading in the YHA guide that the area is famous for UFO's!" This, once again, was over the sea, but may have been anything.

● Sweden: Milton Leitenberg, in a book called "Soviet Submarine Operations in Swedish Waters, 1930 - 1986", published by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, an institute associated with Georgetown University, claims that Soviet subs do regularly travel in Swedish waters, though they deny it. He said: "there have also been sightings in waters belonging to Finland, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Italy and Japan." (Saudi Gazette, 4.10., p.4) I have followed the whole affair closely over the years, there was only one mystery sub in German waters, and this was later identified as a German one. It sank a Danish trawler by mistake. A letter about subs in Scandinavia, also in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 10.10., p.3a.

MARINE LIFE:

● Whales: ancient whale excavated at Kevelaer, 13 m long (Süddeutsche Zeitung=SZ, 7.8., p.36e); 25ft pilot whale got struck at Bathside Bay, Harwich. After a twelve hour struggle, the whale was back in the sea,

no date (Connections, Sept. 87,p.7); a 20 ft blue-nosed whale (called Willie or Wally) stranded near the Severn Bridge, Bristol, on Sept. 2. It managed to wriggle free again, but stranded again. The coastguard helped it go back into the sea a second time. It was thought there was a second whale in Swansea Bay. (D Mirror, p.15, South Wales Echo, p.1, both 3.9.87); 200 bottle-nosed whales stranded at the coast of the USA between North Carolina and New Jersey (Time,31.8.,p.27).

● Sharks: The last basking sharks caught in the British Sea, and basking shark observation scheme (Guardian, 17.8.p.2d) To participate in scheme, write for information to: MCS, 4 Gloucester Road, Ross-on-Why, HR9 5BU, England; sharks in the Gulf of Triest (Rheinpfalz,17.8.); shark attacks in California (Saudi Gazettem 16.9.,p.13); after being shipwrecked off the Dominican Republic, about 100 people were eaten alive by sharks. It was in many papers. (SZ and Rheinpfalz, both 8.10.);largest pointer shark caught off Melbourne by Vic Hislop (SZ, lost date, sometime in Oct. or Nov.)

● Odds & Ends: Coelacanth: Results of a German expedition that tracked the elusive fish with a submarine and, for the first time, observed its behaviour, see Der Spiegel, 5.10.p.277; monstrous catfish excavated at Roman site in Neuenheim, Germany: two metres long! (Rhein-Neckar Zeitung, 5.9.,p.5); rare fish (eagle ray) caught at Coverack, Cornwall (Western Morning News, 25.8.,p.5fgh); a swimming deer in the North Sea off Büsum, saved by the German coastguard (Saarbrücker Zeitung,16.10.p.10); a Southern See-elephant, weighing 3 tons, makes trips inland regularly, to visit some cows grazing on a meadow at Wellington, New Zealand. (Saarbrücker Zeitung, 16.10.p.10f); two young girls devoured by piranhas in black water lagoon, 450 km south of Iquitos, Peru (Saudi Gazette, 19.10.,p.4d)

MARINE FORTEANA:

● A 23-year-old man went out for a swim at Ishiji Beach in August 1985, and disappeared without trace. He reappeared in mid-October 1987 at Okinawa - many miles away. He has lost all memory of the two years in between! (Saudi Gazette,22.10.,p.4f)

● The freighter Matsamaru turned turtle without apparent reason during the best possible weather, off the Japanese island Shikoku. (SZ,24.10.,p.14)

● The ship Melville passed directly over a submarine volcano eruption. "Bubbles bursting nearby and under the hull made horrendous clangs and clamours". The explosion was in the Pacific Ocean, 1,600 km south-east of Tahiti. (Saudi Gazette, 15.10.,p.5f) I have an old clipping, from June16,1959, from the Rheinpfalz. An American pilot reported, 320 km west of Ireland, "a giant green boiling patch" on the ocean surface. He circled the area for 20 minutes, and discovered steam. He thought it was a submarine volcanic eruption.

● The Rhodos Colossus: Neue Zürcher Zeitung,10.7.,p.5abc; Arab News, 6.7.,p.12e; Saudi Gazette,6.7.,p.5cd; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung , 10.7.,p.7cde; Rheinpfalz,8.7.;Spiegel,13.7.;Observer, 12.7.,p.15.

It is violently agitated by the winds, and at times the waves are quite mountainous. *November 1st, 1755*, at the same time as the earthquake at *Lisbon*, these waters were affected in a very extraordinary manner: they rose and flowed up the lake from East to West with vast impetuosity, and were carried above 200 yards up the river *Oich*, breaking on its banks in a wave near three feet high; then continued ebbing and flowing for the space of an hour: but at eleven o'clock a wave greater than any of the rest came up the river, broke on the North side, and overflowed the bank for the extent of 30 feet. A boat near the *General's Hut*, laden with brushwood, was thrice driven ashore, and twice carried back again; but the last time, the rudder was broken, the wood forced out, and the boat filled with water and left on shore.

ITS AGITATIONS IN 1755.

This is a short extract from Pennant's book on Scotland. On p.201, he mentions strange wakes in Loch Ness.